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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 002678

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR,  
I/GNEA, B/BXN, B/BRN, NEA/PPD, NEA/IPA FOR ALTERMEN  
USAID/ANE/MEA  
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH  
PARIS FOR O'FRIEL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON ROAD MAP, ALTERNATIVE  
PALESTINIAN HOMELAND IN JORDAN, IRAQ, SYRIA

NEWS REPORTS  
ROAD MAP

DAILIES REPORTED THE MEETING BETWEEN A/S. BURNS AND ABOU MAZEN. THE STORIES HIGHLIGHTED THAT BURNS DID NOT CONVEY TO THE PALESTINIANS AN ISRAELI UNDERTAKING TO IMPLEMENT THE ROAD MAP, THAT HE ASKED ABOU MAZEN TO FIGHT TERRORISM, AND THAT, AT THE SAME TIME, HE ASKED THE ISRAELIS TO STOP SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY.

IRAQ

THE LEAD STORY IN SEMI-OFFICIAL INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-RAI WAS GEN. GARNER'S PROMISE THAT A JOINT IRAQI-AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE FORMED BY MID MAY. THE SAME STORY APPEARED ON THE FRONT PAGES OF ALL JORDANIAN DAILIES, WHICH HIGHLIGHTED THE PARTITIONING OF IRAQ INTO FOUR ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS..

SEMI-OFFICIAL INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-RAI REPORTED A STATEMENT BY THE MINSTER OF INFORMATION, THAT WASHINGTON DID NOT INVITE JORDAN TO TAKE PART IN THE SECURITY-KEEPING FORCES IN IRAQ, AND THAT HE COUNTRY'S PARTICIPATION IN SUCH AN EFFORT IS CONTINGENT ON AN INTERNATIONAL MANDATE.

ALL DAILIES REPORTED THE ARREST OF HUDA AMMASH, THE IRAQI MICROBIOLOGICAL SCIENTIST AND MEMBER OF THE BA'TH COUNCIL WHO WAS 53RD ON THE LIST OF IRAQIS WANTED BY THE U.S.

SYRIA

SEMI-OFFICIAL INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-RAI REPORTED THAT THE MINSTER OF INFORMATION DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF A SECRET MEETING BETWEEN MAHER AL-ASSAD AND THE FORMER SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ISRAELI MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, EITAN TSOUR.

EDITORIAL COMMENTARIES

-- LEST THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION BE GIVEN INTERNATIONAL LEGITIMACY  
FORMER SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE MOHAMMAD NAJI AMAYREH WROTE IN SEMI-OFFICIAL INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-RAI ON MAY 6: "THE U.S. SEEKS TO EMBELLISH THE IMAGE OF ITS OCCUPATION BY SEEKING THE ASSISTANCE OF COUNTRIES FROM OUTSIDE THE SO-CALLED COALITION, IN ORDER TO DISTRACT ATTENTION FROM ITS VIOLATIONS IN IRAQ, THAT INCLUDE ITS ATTEMPTS TO PARTITION IRAQ, THAT IT SEEKS TO DO GRADUALLY AND WITHOUT FUSS. THE UN AND COUNTRIES OF THE REGION SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO BE LURED INTO GIVING THE OCCUPATION AN INTERNATIONAL LEGITIMACY THAT IT LACKS."

-- EXPORTING BOMBASTIC SLOGANS TO THE IRAQIS  
DAILY COLUMNIST MAHMOUD AL-RIMAWI WROTE IN SEMI-OFFICIAL INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-RAI ON MAY 6: "THE AUTOMATIC RUSH TO [ADVOCATE] ARMED RESISTANCE, UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WILL ONLY INCREASE THE SUFFERING OF THE IRAQIS, DELAY THE EVOLUTION OF AN ADMINISTRATION, AND PRODUCE MORE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS DIVIDES. ALTHOUGH ONE ONLY BOWS IN RESPECT TO SPORADIC ACTS OF RESISTANCE THAT AFFIRM THE IRAQIS RIGHT TO FREEDOM, ARMED RESISTANCE SHOULD NOT BE THE FIRST OR OPTIMAL COURSE OF ACTION AT PRESENT. WE SHOULD TAKE THE MESSAGE FROM THE REJECTION OF ARAB VOLUNTEERS AFTER THE REGIME COLLAPSED."

-- ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE AND THE AMERICAN BIAS  
THE LEADER COMMENTARY IN CENTER-LEFT, INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-DUSTOUR ON MAY 6 READ: "THE PRESENT ISRAELI GOVERNMENT IS VERY UNHAPPY WITH THE ROAD [TO PEACE] AND WITH THE ROAD MAP, AND WILL PROBABLY DO ITS UTMOST TO DETOUR THIS ROAD INTO A DIFFERENT DIRECTION FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE. BUT IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT THE U.S., WHICH INSISTED ON PUBLISHING THE ROAD MAP WITH THE LEAST MEDIA EXPOSURE POSSIBLE, HAS NOT YET UNDERTAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE ROAD MAP ACCORDING TO ITS TIME SCHEDULE, WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN VIOLATED BECAUSE OF THE AMERICAN INSISTENCE ON

POSTPONEMENT, WHICH CAME IN RESPONSE TO ISRAELI DEMANDS. IT IS ALSO REGRETTABLE THAT THE U.S. CONTINUES TO PRESSURE THE PALESTINIAN SIDE, WHICH ANNOUNCED CLEARLY THAT IT ACCEPTS THE ROAD MAP, INSTEAD OF EXERTING REAL EFFORTS TO PERSUADE THE GOVERNMENT OF GENERALS AND RABBIS TO ACCEPT PEACE."

-- THE IMAGE OF AMERICA  
DAILY COLUMNIST BASSEM SAKEJHA WROTE IN CENTER-LEFT, INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-DUSTOUR ON MAY 6: "THE IMAGE OF THE U.S. MAY NEVER HAVE BEEN DARKER THAN IT IS TODAY. THE AMERICAN POLITICAL PLAN, WHICH WAS THE MORAL COVER FOR WAR AND OCCUPATION, CONSISTED OF 'PRESSING FOR DEMOCRACY' AND FINDING SOLUTIONS TO THE 'CHRONIC PROBLEMS.' THESE SEEM AT PRESENT DEVOID OF SUBSTANCE, STARTING WITH THE ROAD MAP, AND INCLUDING THE FALSE DEMOCRACY IN MORE THAN ONE PLACE OF THE ARAB WORLD."

-- THE HUB OF TENSION, AND THE CORE OF THE CONFLICT  
DAILY COLUMNIST MOHAMMAD KA'WASH WROTE IN INDEPENDENT, MASS-APPEAL ARABIC DAILY AL-ARAB AL-YAWM ON MAY 6: "THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION, WHICH IS ABOUT TO SINK IN THE ELECTION SEASON, WILL ALSO FIND ITSELF SUNK IN THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR ON IRAQ, AND I BELIEVE THAT IT IS INCAPABLE OF PLAYING A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN FINDING A SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. THIS MEANS THAT THE HUB OF TENSION, AND THE CAUSES OF CONFLICT WILL REMAIN IN THE MIDDLE EAST, ALL BECAUSE THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION REFUSES TO BE CONVINCED THAT THE CAUSE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IS THE SUBSTANCE AND THE CORE OF CONFLICT IN THE REGION." GNEHM